

SCHOOL & SOCIAL DRAMA.

SETH GREENBACK.

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1877

A Drama

IN FOUR ACTS.

BY

T. S. DENISON.

PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHOR, DE KALB, ILLINOIS.

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SETH GREENBACK.

An Amateur Drama,

IN FOUR ACTS,

BY

Thomas Stewart
T. S. DENISON

*Author of "Odds with the Enemy," "Initiating a Granger," "Wanted, a
Correspondent," "A Family Strike."*

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CHARACTERS.

SETH GREENBACK,
DR. ESTY,
FRANK,
PAT MULDAWN,
SLIGH,

LARK,
GRUBBER,
MRS. GEEENBACK,
MILLIE WINFIELD,
MOLLIE.

COSTUMES.

Any clothing suited to the social standing of the wearer.

STAGE DIRECTIONS.

R means right as the actor faces the audience ; L, left ; C, centre.

SETH GREENBACK.

ACT I.

SCENE, *Seth Greenback's sitting room. Furniture mostly old fashioned and incongruous, furnishing evidences of decided peculiarities in the owner. Table in C, sofa L, chairs R and L; heavy pictures on the walls, one, the portrait of a beautiful boy, over table C, is draped lightly in mourning. General effect is sombre, but conveys the impression of wealth and intelligence.*

Pat. (Pacing floor.) Howly saints! was iver a man wrought as I'm wrought? Faith an' not a bit longer will I sarve ould Greenback, or my name is not Pat Muldawn.

Millie. (Entering R.) What's the matter now, Pat? You are getting into a pet nearly every day with Mr. Greenback lately.

Pat. An' it's your precious self that's a pet, Millie, shwate rosebud.

Millie. Pat, you're silly; I'm nobody's pet.

Pat. Faith an' ye desERVE to be, an' I'll pet ye meself if nobody else will.

Millie. Balderdash! Pat, you have too much blarney. I reckon I'll get along as I have been doin'.

Pat. As ye have been doin'! An' how's that? Haven't ye been rulin' this house almost intirely. Not but what ye should, for ould Greenback is a mean ould tyrant. But how ye manage him is more than I can tell. I niver was anybody's pet, exceptin' one man, an' that was very unfortunate.

Millie. Ha! Ha! He was unfortunate in selectin' his favorites, I s'pose?

Pat. Shure it was meself that was unfortunate in the selection. For he kept borryin' me hard earnin's that I saved, and niver a blissed cint of me wages did he pay me at all.

Millie. Why, Pat, how could you loan him your hard earnin's if he never paid you any money?

Pat. Faith, an' I lint him cash in hand that he should have paid me, but never did. He gave me some quare little slips of paper he called due bills.

Millie. And they are still *due* bills.

Pat. Ay, and well named, for I'm thinkin' they will never be *paid* bills, for the poor gintleman died and bequeathed all his liabilities to an ungrateful father, an' by me sowl the ould gintleman intirely refused the legacy.

Millie. So for want of anything better you concluded to try Mr. Greenback's.

Pat. Yis, out of necessity. Now if there is any vartue in larnin' temperate ways, and practicin' self denial, you see I'm makin' a vartue of necessity.

Millie. Mr. Greenback must be mighty virtuous if he can make virtues out of the necessities of other folks.

Pat. Ay, the ould skinflint. He's a paragon of virtue. He's above timplation. You might as well try to get a war-whoop out of a tobaccy sign by callin' him bad names, as to try to tempt the ould miser from his beaten paths.

Millie. I wish his appetite would tempt him to get us somethin' fit to eat, I'm nearly starved.

Pat. True, Millie, an' ye be. Ye're gettin' thin and maigre like. (*Pinches her cheek and attempts to kiss her.*)

Enter MRS. G. R.

Millie (*Slaps his ears.*) Keep your distance, you blockhead! (*Turns away angrily.*)

Mrs. G. Dear me! Pat, such conduct is very improper. I can't allow it.

Pat. (*To MRS. G.*) Troth an' I think so too, to be nappin' a fellow's noggin in that style. (*To MILLIE.*) Me distance you want me to kape, is it? Faith, an' I think I'll kape it a trifle further away from ye. (*Rubs his face.*)

Mrs. G. Pat, you should be in the field at this time of day. This is the very rush of the harvest. (*MILLIE busies herself arranging books on table.*)

Pat. Is it indade, mam? (*Aside.*) It was always me bad luck to be unlucky.

Mrs. G. Pat, you prefer talking to the girls rather than pitching hay. Doubtless it's pleasanter, but it don't suit folks who have to hire help to have them employed in that way.

Pat. Indade, mam! (*Aside.*) Begorrah, I can't snatch a minute with the girrels but some spalpeen's yelpin', Pat! work!

Mrs. G. Pat, you had better go before Mr. Greenback comes in. He won't like it to see you here.

Pat. I'm off at onct, mam. (*Exit MRS. G. L.*)

Millie. (*Angrily.*) Pat, don't you dare touch me again, you great, impudent booby. What will Mrs. Greenback think? If you do that again I'll break your Irish pate. (*Slaps him again.*)

Pat. (*Comically.*) May I look at ye iver again?

Millie. Sass-box!

Pat. (*Rubs his face.*) Millie, just keep your pet names and your carisses for some one else, won't ye? I never could stand such things onyhow. They turn me head entirely. (*Aside.*) An' that last turned

me body too. (*Aloud.*) Kape all your purty sayin's for master Frank. Poor boy, he needs a dale of sympathy.

Millie. (*Seating herself R of table.*) Pat, you're a dunce. Frank does not need pretty sayin's as much as he needs kind treatment and good friends.

Pat. (*Stands behind chair L of table, puts one foot on chair round and leans right elbow on chair back, head resting on hand in an easy attitude.*) Now ye've hit it to a t. But he'll have one good friend as long as Pat Muldawn's got a shilling, and I'm thinkin' he'll have another while yerself is to the fore.

Millie. (*Slightly confused.*) Yes, Pat, we must stand by him, for he has no other friends in the world except Mrs. Greenback, and she is afear'd to speak a word in his favor.

Pat. It's a ragin' shame the way that ould tyrant does bate him.

Millie. (*Starting violently.*) Oh, Pat, has he whipped Frank again? (*Walks the floor in great agitation.*)

Pat. He *began* it, but he never finished the dirty job, for I heerd the racket and was in the barn immagitly, and I'm thinkin' me remarks on that occasion were more convincin' than illegant.

Millie. I hope you didn't insult him, Pat. He's awful squeamish about such things, and it would only be worse for Frank.

Pat. Niver an insult did I give him. Says I—but I'll not repeat all I said. Says I, "Mr. Greenback, just drop that ould horsewhip, or I'll be afther breakin' ivery bone in your body."

Millie. The old fiend!

Pat. An' says he, "Pat, you're in a passion." Says I, "Shure an' I am. It makes me very blood boil with shame to see you strike that poor crayture who would now be nearly a grown man if ye hadn't starved his poor life out of him." He turned dreadful rid in the face, and I seed I'd raised a breeze an' must stop the rumpus some way. Says I, "An' it's all about an ould shovel handle not worth a dime. Mr. Greenback, you know I'm perfectly willin' to make a new handle durin' me leisure, and not charge ye a cint." An' says he, "All right, Pat; but be careful you don't say something sometime that you will always regret." As he went out I wondered whether he iver regretted anything he iver did, or iver did anything a dacint man wouldn't regret.

Millie. (*Indignantly.*) The disgrace! To think of his strikin' poor Frank like a slave. But he da'sn't strike him when I'm around. I'd like to see him strike me onct, if he dares.

Pat. Shure and what would he think if he should be after strikin' you?

Millie. Think! I wouldn't give him time to think.

Pat. He'd be after thinkin' he'd mowed into a hornet's nest.

Millie. Well, if I seen such meanness goin' on I could be as spiteful as a hornet without half tryin'. (*In her excitement knocks a small vase from the table and breaks it.*)

Pat. Faith an' I believe it.

Millie. Shut up, you monkey! I mustn't let the old man see this. (*Picks up pieces of vase.*) Frank is too good. He actually likes Mr. Greenback; says he was good to him, and furnished him a home when

he had none. A precious home, to be a galley slave for a mean pittance of clothing and coarse food. I'd as lief go to the poor house for my part. And Frank thinks that old Greenback is generous. You know he gave Frank an old gold watch. Heaven only knows what made him do such a recklessly extravagant thing. I s'pose he couldn't get rid of the watch any other way. But he must have been beside himself when he gave it away.

Pat. He wasn't beside himself. He was beside the boy. I seed him when he gave it. He handed it to Frank, and says he, "Frank, here's a watch you may have. I had a boy once. He would have been about your age now, if Providence had not taken him from me." An' would you belave it, Millie, he actually shid tears, an' Frank cried like a five year old spalpeen; an' says he, "Oh, Mr. Greenback, you've been very good to me, and I've been awkward, and careless, and ungrateful." An' Mr. Greenback says, says he, "Niver mind, Frank, I haven't done much for you." An' he left the room so kind o' sudden I couldn't help feelin' sorry for him, for it was one of his awful blue days, when he looks so worn an' sad lookin'. Thin I thought of the day he rapped me over the head for breakin' a wheelborry, and called me a green Irishman. An' I restrained me tears, and rekivered me manhood immagitly. (*Straightens up and tries to look dignified.*)

Millie. So you call that manly to hide your tears when your sympathies were excited. Pah! such manhood, Patrick! Smiles may be counterfeit, but tears mean something.

Pat. Shure an' it's meself can testify to that, for didn't me tears have a dale of meanin' when ye pulled my hair and pounded me noggin, because I said you were the purtiest girrel in the county, an' that your rosy lips were spilin' for a kiss, which I was ready to administer. I'm a man of me worred, an' I'm willin' yet to do that same. (*Seats himself, and leans across the table toward MILLIE.*)

Millie. When you get an opportunity, ha! ha! (*Rising, begins to dust and arrange the room.*)

Enter FRANK R.

Frank. Have you curried the horses yet, Pat? You know Mr. Greenback is in a hurry to start to town, and we must get to work at the hay. There's not a minute to lose.

Pat. Shure Master Frank, an' ye's in a great hurry. The hay will not be dry for an hour. Take it aisy a bit.

Frank. Take time by the forelock, Pat.

Pat. Be jabers, an' if ye take him by the forelock too early in the mornin' ye must howld him all day. Frank, ye are larnin' the ways of Mr. Greenback very fast. Faith an' ye are as anxious about the hay as the ould miser himself. What interest have ye in the hay? It doesn't pay us to fret about the farmin'. The master will attend to that.

Millie. He will let nothing suffer for want of fussin' over.

Frank. It pays to do right, Pat. Mr. Greenback depends on us to lead in the field. If we don't get out the teams in time, will the other men follow?

Pat. Shure an' are we the main dependence? If I'm the boss in the master's absence, I'll get the worth of the money out of them lazy spalpeens. (*Rises—sticks his thumbs in arm-holes of his vest, and straightens up with an air of importance.*) Faith an' the idlin' rascals wouldn't airn their salt if it wasn't for a drivin' boy like meself to lead them.

Frank. You must have been born to lead, Patrick.

Pat. An' ye be flatterin' now. May I inquire the grounds of your opinion?

Frank. Because it is hard to get you to follow.

Enter GREENBACK L. All start in surprise.

G. I think he'll follow me. It's confounded queer that servants can't get to work without being watched. I sent you after Pat an hour ago, Frank. What have you been doing? Spending your time here gossiping; keeping Millie from the work she should have finished long ago. I've a notion to shake you. (*Pat behind him shaking his fists at him.*)

Millie. (Aside.) The old crocodile!

G. A half dozen men around, and not one on hand when you want him. Here I've had to hitch up myself, when I'm in a desperate hurry. And you lazy louts are gossiping with the girls.

Frank. Mr. Greenback, I couldn't find Pat. I went to the barn to call him, but—

G. No excuse for idleness. Oh! you will all be the death of me yet! (*Fidgets nervously.*)

Pat. (Aside.) Amin to that remark.

G. (Furiously.) Why do you stand here gaping like a lot of idiots. Get to work at once every one of you. (*Exeunt PAT and FRANK L, MILLIE runs out R. In her hurry drops a piece of the vase.*)

G. (Calling L.) Pat! Pat! (*Enter PAT.*) Put the ponies in the stable. I'm not going to-day. It's too late, curse it!

Pat. Shure an' if ye plaze it's only a trifle beyant nine.

G. I said it was too late. Did you hear? Put the ponies in the stable, and get to the hayfield at once.

Pat. Yis, sur, immagitly. (*Aside.*) If not sooner. (*Going L. Aside.*) Begorrah, an' the ould man has one of his tantrums to-day. (*Exit L.*)

G. (Walking the floor in agitation. Sees piece of vase and picks it up.) What's this? (*Musingly.*) The work of a careless servant. So much money thrown away! Mrs. Greenback will have such things. Talks of art and its refining influences. Well, I thought so once too, but I should like to see the art that can refine this household. My life is like that vase, once fair, now in ruins. Why didn't I go? I can't stay here. Oh, what can quiet the scorpion-like stings of remorse! They gnaw my very heart strings, and turn my home into a hell, in which I am the presiding demon. The delirious starts of a morbid conscience prey with keener tooth because no penitence comes to soothe the hideous wound. No, there is no repentence for the miser. Miser!

did I say? How that odious word once made my ears tingle with shame, when first I heard it flung at me in bitter taunt. Oh, God, how I've changed! I'm no longer the same man. 'Tis well I bear a new name, the badge of my dishonor, which, partly blazoning my character, better hides my former self. My eye no longer sees the mocking leer, nor hears my ear the scornful gibe. My every faculty, like my soul, slumbers to all but baser, grosser objects. Men despise, and righteously too, the hated miser. But the r contempt is only a tithe of that which I would heap mountains high upon my own debased self. But why despise the creature of our own making? Deliberately I sold myself for gold. I signed and sealed the contract, and daily pay to Mammon his hateful interest, cent. per cent. Worse shame, I sought to exalt and enrich my own flesh and blood at the expense of a father's dishonor. An incensed deity rebuked my idolatry, and took from me my precious child, but left me the curse. That will never depart. I am doomed and damned forever.

Enter R MRS. GREENBACK.

Mrs. G. Seth, I thought you had gone to the city this morning. What has caused this sudden change of mind? I saw the ponies at the door a moment ago.

G. Ask me no questions. Have you nothing better to do than waste your time and mine with idle questions?

Mrs. G. Seth, your despondent moods have grown more frequent lately. You must not give way to them. They bode no good to your peace of mind.

G. (Savagely.) Peace of mind! Dare you speak again of peace of mind? True, I have no peace, but my mind will hold its sway while life remains. I have been a fool, but I never will be a madman, even to please you.

Mrs. G. To please me! Seth, how *can* you speak so? Is it possible that you think your own wife can find pleasure in your distress. Your troubles are my troubles; your grief is my grief; your joy my joy. Would that your love were mine as mine is yours. It would make a better man of you.

G. Mary, cease your wretched prating about love. Once we loved with as strong and holy affection as human beings can know. But that is past. Stony indifference has taken its place. We are not the same; *(With feeling.)* God knows we are not. Our love lies sleeping in the silent tomb, and it were hollow mockery to fan those cold ashes, hoping to start the sacred flame.

Mrs. G. Seth, I own your words are sadly true when you speak of icy indifference. Whatever else may fail let us still cling to truth and candor. Do you doubt me now, when I solemnly assure you that my love has sprung into new life, and that I still love you devotedly?

G. Doubt your word? No. But I do doubt the existence of the feeling that you speak of. You deceive yourself. Remember that we agreed together years ago that our early love was dead. Was not that a fair understanding? And do you now censure me for accepting your own statements? No, we are like two neighboring mountain peaks,

linked together yet distinct and silent, nothing to each other but near neighbors.

Mrs. G. Seth, you deceive yourself; 'tis not I. Since the sad time of which you speak, my love has been born again and strengthened by sorrow. It is stronger, deeper, and holier to-day than was the plighted faith of the young girl at the altar years ago. (*Beseechingly puts her hand on his shoulder.*) Seth, do you still doubt? Can you yet return my love?

G. Never! Can a stone feel grateful because it is set in a corner? Mary, you have wasted your love on a wretch who cannot return it, on a half-man whose better nature has perished, and whose baser parts run riot in the ruins. Your revelation only adds tenfold to my misery, because I deserve no love, and despise to owe anybody.

Mrs. G. Cease your avaricious ways, and be a man again, is all I ask.

G. All you ask! Woman, are you mad? What greater request could you ask of me?

Mrs. G. At least make restitution to those you have wronged. Have your brother Will and his family no claims upon you? Must he be forever wronged?

G. Wronged! And who brought his wrongs upon him? Can he not blame his own shameless dissipation and wickedness?

Mrs. G. But he is a man now, and we have reason to believe a better man. Seth, to repair the wrong you have done him will make a better man of you. Justice demands it.

G. A better man of me! I *am* a bad man. But it is hard to be taunted about one's crimes by those who have counseled their perpetration. Woman, (*Pointing at her.*) my life has rested under one long, baleful curse, and you have not laid a finger to the lightening of that curse. I do not complain, but I speak plain truth. Did you not advise me to retain Will's money, and to stand silent when his enemies drove him to the wall?

Mrs. G. I did. I am willing to bear my full burden of shame. But can we not yet atone for our crime, partly, at least? I have a thousand times regretted our wicked course and its shameful consequences.

G. Wife, it is too late. The deed is done. You wished station in society, I desired wealth and influence for the sake of my darling boy. Where is your station, and where is my influence? Ha! ha! we have a name, 'tis true. I bear the name that was always on my tongue, and among strangers we carry the synonym of our ruling passion. Is it better than the one we dishonored in our native land?

Mrs. G. (*Pleadingly.*) Oh, Seth, it is not too late. It is never too late to repent of sin, and turn to righteousness. Don't continue to harden your heart. Remember our lost Frank. We saved for him. He is taken from us. Let us devote our wealth to the good of others. Can it be that you still await his return? (*Turns toward wall pointing to the picture of the young boy.*) Vain hope! Sad hope!

G. I do not expect the grave to give up its ill-gotten gains. He is gone forever.

Mrs. G. Then why not do justice? His angel cheeks (*Still pointing to the picture.*) would blush with crimson dye could he know what has been done in his name, and what has not been undone. Has the remembrance of him no power yet to bless?

G. None! The worship of Mammon has fretted his sweet image into a mocking phantom, to taunt me in my dreams. The gold hoarded for him has cursed me, though we meant it to bless him. But it shall curse no other soul. No one shall have a penny of it till I die. They call me Old Greenback, a skinflint and a miser, and I shall remain so. You speak of repentance. You will be the better for it, and I will be the worse by contrast. I am past repentance, or the power to feel any of the finer emotions of the human soul.

Mrs. G. If not for Will's sake, think of his wife and child, and when you think of his child remember your own Frank.

G. I have ever remembered him with gall in my heart. His fate was crueller than death. He received no mercy, and I will show none.

Mrs. G. Hard and unmerciful. (*Turns away toward R.*)

G. 'Tis useless to plead.

Mrs. G. (*Aside.*) A madman in truth. Lost to every sense of honor. (*Exit R.*)

G. Mary's conscience, after a long sleep, is aroused at last. (*Paces floor.*) She will no longer allow me a moment's peace until I make full restitution. No longer will we be in sympathy, and the last link which binds me to the past and to my fellows, is severed. Her words are the voice of truth. I know I should be a better man. Reason remains to me in full vigor, but AVARICE, the master, nods imperiously to her helpless slave, and moral faculties are sunk in helpless imbecility. Why was our family doomed? A fond father and mother would turn in their graves if they knew the fate of their promising sons (*Enter PAT unobserved, L.*), one a miser, a by-word and a reproach among his fellow-men; the other a prodigal, a reveler, a gambler, a criminal. A criminal! dreadful thought! but what am I, too, but a criminal? Perhaps it was right to withhold his patrimony when he knew not how to save it. At least it was prudent. But what was it to retain it when he plead for his rights? *Crime*; a foul wrong against which a youthful brother and his starving wife and babe have plead in vain. Oh, God of justice, let me be a man again! I swear to Thee (*Drops on his knees.*)—No, I'll not swear. I dare not. In the years long gone, before my manhood ceased to struggle with my baser self, I have resolved again and again, and broken all my resolutions. I'll not swear. (*Rises.*) It would only sink me deeper in the ominous shades which are surely closing over me. It is useless to struggle; all is lost, lost! (*Exit R.*)

Pat. Shure an' here's a pretty rivalation. The ould chap's been chatin' his kinfolk, bad luck to him. He says he won't swear. I'm thinkin' swearin' would be a refreshin' vartue after such thricks as his. (*Enter MILLIE R.*) After all he seemed awful sorry like.

Millie. Pat, what are you talking to yourself about?

Pat. The vartues of the master.

Millie. I did not know he had any to discuss.

Pat. Shure, Millie, an' there's a good streak in his character after all. You know he gets the dumps, and feels sorry like, an' he can be ginerous, too, when he tries.

Millie. Yes, if it's ginerous to give choice wines to strangers, and feed the family on crusts and old bones.

Pat. Divil take me if I don't think the master's a dissicted puzzle, anyway. He got put together wrong. (*FRANK calls PAT L.*) I'm comin', sir, directly in haste, as soon as I get a jug of water for the boys. (*Exit PAT L MOLLIE R.*)

CURTAIN.

ACT II.

SCENE, same as Act I. FRANK assisting MILLIE to arrange the furniture. MILLIE dusting the room.

Millie. Frank, you are down in the mouth about something. What's the matter?

Frank. I've been thinking.

Millie. What are you thinking about, Frank?

Frank. About you, Millie.

Millie. (*Starts slightly, and turns to hide her blushes.*) About me. That's odd.

Frank. I was thinking what a good friend you have been to me, and wondering why you should befriend such an unpromising specimen as myself.

Millie. I've learned one thing, and that is, that it aint always promisin' people that *does* most.

Frank. And you think that mebbe I'll do something because I don't promise. Well, I'm sure I don't know what I can ever do. Somehow I've been awful unlucky. When them fellows stole me away from home they did the business for me. I haint got on the track just right yet.

Millie. And you never will while you stay here. Why don't you run away. It's a shame for you to work so hard for nothing. Pat and me get our pay, but you get nothin', only ill-usage. I wouldn't stand it.

Frank. If it hadn't been for you and Pat I believe I'd died long ago. But I'll never run away. Please don't mention that again. I won't sneak off like a thief or a coward. Mr. Greenback took me in when I was a little thing, not able to earn much, and I'm going to repay him.

Millie. You've already repaid him a hundred fold.

Frank. This is my home, the only place in the world where anybody cares anything for me, and I'm going to stay here. Mrs.

Greenback is kinder now than she used to be. Mr. Greenback wants to be kind too if he could.

Millie. But he's so mean he can't.

Frank. Don't say that, Millie. You don't know how he feels. Sometimes he looks so careworn and wishful, like he'd lost something, and acts so queer that you'd nearly cry to see him. I pity him, for I know something awful's happened him sometime. He shows it.

Millie. That's when his tenants don't pay the rent.

Frank. No, it ain't that, neither. It's some grief. He talks to himself, and goes on awfully. That is, he used to more than now, when I came here, ten years ago. I believe Mr. Greenback wants to be good, and knows that he ought.

Millie. Of course he knows it. He's no fool. Ten years! What a long time. I've been here six, but if it wasn't that Greenback is good pay, I wouldn't stay another day.

Enter PAT R.

Pat. Faith, an' I'm thinkin' ye has a different raison intirely.

Millie. What's that?

Pat. Shure an' Master Frank is here, to say nothin' of the other attractions. (*Aside.*) Be jabers, an' I'm here meself.

Millie. Other attractions! Fiddlesticks. Yourself, I s'pose!

Pat. Meself! Howly prophets! I've been called by a good many names in my time, some of them illegant and some of them not, but I niver was called by such a convanient title as fiddlesticks. Faith, an' its appropriate too, for I'll not die with all my music in me. (*Whistles "Pat Malloy."*)

Millie. Pat, you're a fool.

Pat. Begorrah, an' I have it now. Ye called me fiddlesticks, not because of my music, though that is very shwate and inticin', but because I'm always getting into scrapes.

Frank. Hist! You'll get into another soon. Mr. Greenback is coming.

Millie. Goodness sake! (*Runs out R, PAT and FRANK following.*)

Enter GREENBACK L, carrying a quilt which he throws on sofa, L.

G. (*Calls savagely.*) Pat! Frank! come back! (*They turn toward him.*) What are you doing here you lazy louts? Can't I go away from home for an hour without coming back and finding you loafing around the house? Be off at once, both of you. (*They start R.*) Hold on, Pat. Bring in a basket of early harvests which I brought from the orchard. They're at the gate. They are beauties. No finer fruit in this country than my orchard produces. Hurry up, Pat.

Pat. All right, sir. (*Exit L.*)

Enter MRS. G. R.

Mrs. G. Where have you been, Seth?

G. Down at Burns's. Crops are looking splendid. The wheat shocks are thicker than I ever saw them before, I think. If the rain don't spoil them.

Mrs. G. Never mind the rain. We shall have plenty anyway.

G. There's a great risk in farming. There's either too much rain or none.

Mrs. G. Even Providence can't please a grumbler.

G. I'm not grumbling, Mrs. G., I'm thankful.

Mrs. G. If the potatoes hadn't failed.

G. I came through the big orchard coming back. The trees are bending with apples. I brought up a basketful. The first ripe brought a dollar a bushel. The market is glutted now, and I'm afraid we'll have to use them ourselves. It's a pity though. They are too nice to use at home. Here's Pat now. (*Enter PAT L, with basket of golden apples.*) Beauties aren't they, Mary? (*Places basket on chair L of table.*)

Mrs. G. Very fine, Seth! Can't we have some for dinner?

G. I suppose so. One apiece will be sufficient, will it not? They are large you see.

Mrs. G. They are not the choicest. (*Holds one up.*) You sold the best. Besides we want some for pies.

G. Pies! PIES! Pies are expensive; besides they are not wholesome. Doctors will all tell you that.

Pat. (*Aside.*) Doctors be hanged for such haythenish advice.

Mrs. G. Seth Greenback, what's the use of starving your family when bushels of fruit are rotting under the trees, and you can't sell it. I won't be scrimped to death any longer.

G. I think prices will rise.

Pat. (*Aside.*) Such financeerin' strikes me dumb with admiration.

Mrs. G. I'm going to live if prices do rise.

G. Well, you may use *these* anyway. Pat, I grow the best apples in the country. These have a splendid flavor. Try them.

Pat. Thank ye, an' I will. (*Takes an apple from the basket. Is about to bite it.*)

G. Wait a minute, Pat. Too much raw fruit is not safe at this season. You know they have the cholera in the city. Let's divide. (*Takes the apple from Pat, cuts off a small slice and hands it to Pat on the knife.*) What a flavor they have!

Pat. Don't you think, sir, I'd better only smell the knife? I'm afeerd of the cholera.

Mrs. G. Pat, you deserve another slice for that. (*Laughs.*)

G. Pat, you are too much of a wag ever to succeed in this world.

Pat. Faith, then I'm thinkin' I'll take the praste's advice and keep a close eye to the nixt, where I'll take a fresh start, may be in better company. (*Takes the apple.*)

G. Pat, an empty stomach makes a clear head.

Pat. (*Aside.*) An' a fat pocket-book makes a lean sowl. (*GREENBACK cuts a small slice for MRS. G., one for himself, and places the remainder of the apple in the basket. Attention of MRS. G. is attracted to the quilt.*)

Mrs. G. I declare if Millie hasn't brought a quilt in here and left it. I never knew her to be so careless before. (*Picks up quilt.*) No, that is not ours. How could it have come here?

G. I got it at Burns's.

Mrs. G. The one the Sewing Society gave them last winter (*Holding it up.*) Did you dare to take that?

G. There was nothing else to take.

Mrs. G. Then I'd do without the rent forever before I'd take away the bed of a poor invalid woman.

Pat. (Aside.) Be jabbers, he only took the kiver.

G. I'll teach him to go off and work for Jones when he owes me.

Mrs. G. Have you no conscience?

G. If you please, Mrs. Greenback, we will say nothing about conscience.

Pat. Faith, Missus an' I can explain that, beggin' your pardon. Your husband's conscience is ashlaape, an' he wanted a quilt to tuck it up in.

G. Get out, you Irish vagabond, or I'll crack your rattle head for you. (*Rushes at PAT, who exits R.*) Mary, (*Imperiously.*) take out these apples and that quilt.

Mrs. G. (Takes up quilt and basket. Aside.) What shall I do? I dare not return it. (*Exit R.*)

Knocking heard L. MR. G. goes to door. Enter GRUBBER, ESTY, and SLIGH.

Grubber. Good morning, Mr. Greenback.

G. Good morning, Mr. Grubber. I'm glad to see you. Walk in.

Grubber. (Introduces ESTY and SLIGH.) Dr. Esty, Mr. Greenback. Mr. Sligh, Mr. Greenback.

G. (Shakes hands with them.) Very glad to see you, gentlemen. Take seats. (*Places seats. ESTY and SLIGH seated L C. GREENBACK and GRUBBER R C.*)

Grubber. These gentlemen are out from town takin' a little rest. They're stoppin' at our house. They thought your grounds looked so snug that they would like to come up and see them. I 'low they don't see no nicer in these parts.

Esty. Very fine location, indeed.

Sligh. And improved with great taste.

G. (Pleased.) We don't make pretensions to taste, but we have taken some pains to fix up a little. (*During this scene SLIGH watches GREENBACK closely, while taking his part in the conversation.*)

Grubber. Did it all himself too. Beatinest man in the world for plannin'. Greenback, you ought to spend a little money on these grounds. Why don't you bring water from that big spring over on the hillside, and make a fountain and a duck pond, and have some swans and notions like them 'ere city chaps does. I reckon they'd fix it up mighty slick.

G. That would cost too much. Can't afford such things when times are so dreadful close.

Esty. (*Rises to look at pictures. Gazes at picture of the boy. Is observed doing so by SLIGH. Aside.*) I think he's in advance of the times in closeness.

Sligh. And then it would look artificial after all. Nothing like rural simplicity, you know, as the poets say.

Grubber. Waal, I reckon you can find enough rural simplicity in this country outside the yard.

G. Quite true, Grubber. Excuse me, gentlemen, a moment. (*Goes to door R. Calls MILLIE.*) I'll have you try a little wine, gentlemen. I think you will pronounce it good for home-made. (*MILLIE appears at the door R.*) Millie, tell Frank to bring some wine and fruit at once.

Millie. Yes, sir.

G. Gentlemen, we have a splendid view of the river in the distance from the piazza. Have a look at it?

Esty. Certainly! (*Exeunt ESTY and GRUBBER L, following GREENBACK. SLIGH remains.*)

Sligh. I'm interested in something else more than in the river just now. By George, it must be him. (*Gazing at picture of boy.*) That's the boy sure as guns! (*Looks around the room.*) He has money yet too. May be this discovery will pan out something for somebody. I'll draw the old chap out a little. He's sharp to change his name and put on the air of an eccentric old fish. (*Re-enter GREENBACK, ESTY and GRUBBER.*)

Esty. Why didn't you go out and look at the view? It's splendid.

Sligh. I saw it as we came in.

Esty. (*To GREENBACK.*) As you remarked, you make your own wine, Mr. Greenback. A good idea. You know then what it's made of; I suppose it's cheaper too?

G. Yes, much cheaper. I can't afford imported wine often.

Sligh. Where did you learn the art of wine making, Mr. Greenback, if I may be so inquisitive?

G. I picked it up myself.

Grubber. As he does everything else.

Esty. (*Aside.*) That doesn't belong to him by right.

Grubber. I'll tell you what, Greenback is a genius.

Sligh. Beg pardon! I thought you might have learned the business somewhere in the wine regions. Judging from appearances, though, I suppose you've always lived here. (*Eyes him for answer.*)

G. No; (*Hesitating.*) I came out here from the East.

Sligh. From Pennsylvania, I should say.

G. No, not exactly.

Esty. You can tell from Mr. Greenback's speech that he is not from Pennsylvania. It sounds very much like our dialect where I was brought up, down in York State.

G. (*Nervously.*) In what respect?

Grubber. There's right smart difference in people's lingo, but dang me if I could ever tell purcisely where a man came from by his gab.

Esty. I can generally guess pretty closely. (*GREENBACK looks uneasy.*) I should say that you came from Rockrib county, New York, Mr. Greenback.

G. (*Uneasily.*) In fact I did come from that region.

Sligh. (*Aside.*) The very same, I'd bet my head. Wonder if Esty suspects him. (*Enter FRANK R, bearing a tray containing a pitcher of water, a bottle of wine, and a plate of apples. Sets the tray on the table. Enter PAT R.*)

Pat. Mr. Greenback, shall we saw up the balance of the wood now, or go down and repair the fence forinst Jones's pasture?

G. Repair the fence first, Patrick. (*FRANK, in wiping the dust from the bottle, knocks off a goblet, which is broken.*) What are you doing, you awkward numskull? I'll teach you to break things that way. (*Flies at FRANK in a passion, and siezes him by the collar. Is about to strike him.*) You'll ruin me yet with your awkwardness.

Pat. (*Steps forward indignantly. Draws back to strike GREENBACK. All jump up excitedly. GRUBBER seizes PAT.*) Hands off, Mr. Greenback, or I'll break your ould pate Shure an' I've seen that boy abused too long alridy. I've parsevered in kapin silence, but be jabers parsaverance has caised to be a vartue. This is more than human flesh and bones can stand.

Esty. (*Aside.*) He's a brute out and out.

G. Pat, do you dare to insult me here?

Pat. Ay, if you dare touch that boy.

Grubber. Gentlemen, don't get excited. Greenback, let the boy go; it was an accident.

Esty. He feels badly enough about it, too. He's a good, faithful boy, or I'm badly mistaken.

Pat. Faith, an' we were both kind o' hasty like. I'll make the price of that all right out of my nixt month's wages.

G. I guess I'm able to lose a tumbler. Get to work at once, both of you, without another word.

Pat. (*Going with FRANK.*) Yis, sur. (*Aside.*) If there was no company prisint, he'd be able to take a dime for it. (*Exeunt R.*)

G. Take seats, gentlemen. Don't let this little affair mar your pleasure. (*Opens bottle and pours out wine.* Passes a goblet to SLIGH and one to GRUBBER.*)

Esty. (*Aside.*) I'd as soon drink poison as touch it.

G. (*To ESTY, who is still standing.*) Have a seat, Mr. Esty, and try some of this old grape juice.

Sligh. It's capital, Esty.

Grubber. Cleans out the cobwebs first rate. (*Smacks his lips loudly.*)

G. Come, man.

Esty. (*Aside.*) Hang the fellow. I suppose I'll have to drink for manners' sake. (*Coldly.*) I'll try it. (*Seats himself L, and takes a few sips.*)

G. Try these apples, they are finely flavored. (*To ESTY.*)

Esty. No, thank you; I think we must be going. Jack, what do you say?

* Cold tea will serve for "drinks." The players should always drink where the sentiment requires it.

Sligh. I say it's deuced unmannerly to snatch a fellow away in this style, when there's good cheer.

Grubber. What on arth's the use of this hurry? We don't visit here every day.

Esty. (*Aside.*) Thank the Lord for that.

Sligh. Well, if we must, we must; that's all. (*All rise.*)

G. (*Passing apples.*) Put one in your pocket to try on the way. (*SLIGH and GRUBBER take an apple apiece.*)

Esty. No, thank you. (*Moves to door L, followed by others.*) I do but one thing at a time, so I cannot eat and drive at the same time. Good day, Mr. Greenback.

G. Good day, Mr. Esty. (*Shake hands.*) Good day, Mr. Sligh. Sorry to have you rush off so, gentlemen.

Grubber. Well, as fur me, I s'pose you'll see me agin purty soon. I reckon I'll be in these parts a right smart while.

Sligh. And so'll the rest of us too, if I'm not mistaken. (*Aside.*) I guess we'll like the air here. (*Exeunt L.*)

G. I'm glad they're gone. It's queer that Esty should mention York State. He may know too much, and that Sligh knows a good deal more than he tells, I'll bet. (*Paces the floor in thought.*) Can it be possible that some one from down East has discovered my secret and put these men on my track? Impossible! No one from that part ever settled here, and that's why I chose this locality. Pshaw! my fears are groundless. A dozen years are a cycle in this fast age. And then I've changed greatly. Ugh! (*Shudders.*) No need to remind myself of that. (*Steps to a mirror R, and surveys himself; strokes his bushy whiskers.*) Tut! tut! Seth Greenback, nobody would ever take you for the handsome George Walford of twenty years ago. In truth I'm another man. Twenty years did I say? Aha! Seth Greenback, you're twenty to-day; for just twenty years ago to-night George Walford clasped his young brother's hand in a hurried farewell. He swore to aid and defend that imprudent brother, fleeing from the stern demands of offended justice. The oath passed into the black nothingness of the night, and with it the fair name of George Walford. In a few short months Seth Greenback robbed the one whom he swore to protect. Even poor Will would not know me now. I wonder where he is? In a drunkard's grave long before this, I suppose. Poor fellow! The papers said he left for California, with his boy, after his wife's death. Well, no matter. It's all over now. (*Exit L.*)

Enter FRANK R.

Frank. (*Picking up fragments of broken goblet.*) What humiliation! I wouldn't minded a whipping, for I suppose I deserved it for my awkwardness. But I won't stand this degradation before strangers any more. Mr. Greenback thinks it's smart, but I think it's mean. I'll tell him so, too, the very next time he does it. He was good to me when I was an outcast, but I've stuck to him long enough. I've paid him well for that. I'll do right by him still, if he'll let me, but I won't be knocked around any longer.

Enter MILLIE R.

Millie. (*Wiping her eyes; has been weeping.*) It's too bad, Frank. Oh! I could tear him to pieces. (*Covers her face with her hands.*)

Frank. Don't mind it, Millie.

Millie. You've never had nothin' but knocks.

Frank. Yes, I have. Father and mother loved me. I don't remember anything about them only that father called me his darling, and said he loved me better than anything else in this world. Then the men stole me away and took me from him forever.

Millie. Your father and mother must 'a been good people.

Frank. (*Picking up plate of fruit and tray.*) They were, indeed. Oh! what *would* they do when I was gone?

Millie. I wish you could live with them again, Frank.

Frank. They're dead long ago, I know, Millie; I can't bear to talk about it. (*Picks up bottle. Starts toward R.*)

Millie. Let me take the plate, Frank. You can't carry all them things.

Frank. Yes, I can. This is my work, you know.

Millie. I don't care a snap whose work it is. I'm going to carry that plate. (*Takes plate of apples. Exeunt R.*)

ACT III.

SCENE, room in a hotel, plainly furnished; cheap chromos on the walls, a few chairs and spittoons, two or three small tables with dingy covers and call bells. Seated around a table C, SLIGH (rear of table), ESTY R, and LARK L.

Sligh. Lark, I tell you what, we've found the queerest old coon up here that ever you saw. You know that old brick house where there's such a large orchard?

Lark. On the right hand, about two miles out?

Sligh. Yes. Doctor and I were up there the other day. Old Grubber took us up and introduced us.

Lark. Is he as queer a case as Grubber?

Sligh. Ten times queerer, but not half as much of a gentleman. But I guess he's been a gentleman once.

Esty. It's a long time ago, I think.

Sligh. You're too crusty about trifles, Esty.

Esty. Do you call that a trifle, to act as he did the other day towards that poor boy?

Sligh. Ha! ha! Lark, deuced if Doctor didn't get into high dudgeon because Old Greenback—that's the old codger's name, by the way—was about to cuff the ears of a gawky butter-weed who broke a goblet as he was bringing in the wine. Blood and pistols! if that wan't a pretty little bit of sentiment on the Doctor's part.

Lark. Yes; almost as sentimental as your oaths. *Blood* and *pistols*! Did you get that at an old ladies' tea party? Have you abandoned the use of all those words that polite printers spell mostly with dashes?

Sligh. Not entirely, but I must defer a little to the Doctor's notions of propriety. He's got very sentimental of late.

Esty. If you call that sentiment, then I *am* sentimental. I tell you the fellow's a brute to act so. If he hadn't been in his own house I'd knocked him down, I believe.

Sligh. Let's look at both sides of that question. Esty, were you doing exactly the polite thing when you refused his hospitality so rudely, after his kindness to us?

Esty. Hospitality be hanged! I can't be polite to a man I don't respect, and I don't want his hospitality.

Sligh. Guests of our stripe oughtn't to be too particular.

Esty. (*Angrily.*) Guests of our stripe! Jack, I know I'm not fit for the society of decent people, but you are the last one to taunt me with my crimes.

Sligh. I don't say it to taunt *you*, Esty. I take my share; but you may have forgotten that two men once left their native village rather unceremoniously, because they happened to put another man's name to a brief piece of writing.

Esty. (*Bitterly.*) Well, and if they did, who suggested the miserable work, and who would have taken the lion's share if the scheme had succeeded?

Sligh. (*Angrily.*) You needn't have followed my suggestions if you didn't choose. You were of age.

Esty. In years, but not in the ways of wicked men.

Lark. Here boys, this has gone far enough. Let's have something to take. (*Rings bell.*) There's no use calling up bygones. Why don't you talk business, Jack?

Sligh. Hush! We're not far from other ears.

Enter MOLLIE R.

Mollie. An' what will yez have?

Lark. Cigars and brandy.

Mollie. Yis, sur. (*Exit R.*)

Sligh. Lark, don't talk so deuced loud. Remember we're in a hotel.

Lark. Third rate tavern, I'd call it.

Enter MOLLIE R, bearing tray and glasses, etc.

Sligh. Mollie, (*MOLLIE going R.*) close the door. There's a draught here.

Mollie. On the brandy bottle did you mane, sur?

Sligh. No; (*Laughing.*) from the doors

Mollie. Arrah thin, an' I'll close them both. (*Closes both. Going R. Aside.*) The bye's are up to somethin'. (*Exit R.*)

(*They pour out a glass of brandy each, which they gulp down excepting ESTY, who merely tastes his, unnoticed by the others.*)

Lark. That goes right to the spot. Now for business at once, before we're interrupted. Jack, state your case.

Sligh. Briefly it is this, that we crack Old Greenback's crib, and see what's to be had.

Lark. Is it worth the trouble?

Sligh. Splendid opening. No trouble to get into that old house, and they say he always has lots of money around him, to say nothing of his solid silverware.

Lark. Agreed! When shall we try it?

Sligh. Will you join us, Esty?

Esty. Jack, I'm surprised at this proposition, but on second thought I've no right to be surprised. I suppose you think me bad enough for anything. But, thank God, I've never stolen yet.

Sligh. Stealing! Who talked of stealing? This is merely a question of nocturnal finance.

Esty. There's no use joking. I never got a penny that didn't belong to me, and I never will.

Sligh. Came pretty near it though, once.

Esty. I know it. But chance prevented it, and saved me.

Sligh. (*Sneeringly.*) Humph! If you consider yourself *saved* there's no use of argument.

Esty. None. I'm not the man I used to be. And I'm sorry to learn that you have not mended your ways in all these years.

Sligh. No preachin' now, if you please. All I want to know is whether you'll blow on us.

Esty. Perhaps I shall. If it was anybody but Old Greenback I would very quick. I think it would do him good to lose part of his money.

Lark. So you would turn traitor if you chose, Esty?

Esty. (*Fumps up in a violent passion.*) Dare you call me traitor? (*Siezes bottle, and is about to strike LARK, who draws a pistol.*)

Lark. (*Fumps up and cocks his pistol.*) I'm ready if that is your game.

Sligh. (*Rushes round table front of LARK; knocks pistol aside.*) What the devil do you mean by such nonsense? Don't raise a row here, or the game's up.

Esty. No man shall call me traitor. I did not seek your confidence, and would scorn to betray a *friend*.

Sligh. That's all right, old boy. Don't blow if you can help it. But I think we'll not give him time to blow. Let's try the thing to-night. That will leave him no time to reflect, and ease his conscience too. What do you say, Lark?

Lark. All right. I'm ready any minute.

Sligh. Then we've no time to lose. We must get our gimcracks in order before midnight. (*Going L.*) Good evening, Esty. Sorry you can't join us, but business is business. (*Aside.*) Wonder if he suspects who Old Greenback is? No, that can't be. (*Exeunt R.*)

Esty. Here's a pretty go. Let a man once step aside from the path of strict rectitude and he is open to the base proposals of every

villain. Hanged if I don't see about this business a little further.
(*Exit L.*)

Enter MOLLIE R.

Mollie. Bloody murder! Can I iver again trust me sivin sinses? I'm overpowered intirely! My prisence of mind is clane gone. (*Enter PAT L, unobserved.*) Och, an' I think I'll be obliged to faint for a few minutes to rekiver mesilf. (*Moves towards a chair to sit down. PAT clasps her in his arms.*)

Mollie. (*Screams.*) Mercy on me, Pat, an' is it you? How you scart me!

Pat. (*With his arm round her waist.*) Shure, Mollie, darlint, ant what ails ye? Have ye the diptheria? Musha, an' like as not ye's go' the new disase that's come around so suddint. The doctor says that Misther Jones's wife has it awful bad. It's a—a—begorrah, what is it? —a cycloid attack, if ye knows what that manes. An' I'm no Latin scholar meself, but accordin' to the best of me larnin' it must be a disase of the heart.

Mollie. Oh! it's dreadful to think of, Pat.

Pat. Mollie, dear, I'm slightly afflicted in the same way meself. Let me perscribe ye a dose, to betaken ivery avenin' till a cure is afflicted. (*Draws her to him and kisses her.*)

Mollie. (*Gives him a ringing slap.*) What do ye mane, ye blunderbuss. Och, an' ye'll kape your medicine a long time for me, I'll warrant.

Pat. An' it's for you I'm kapin' it. (*Turns up the brandy bottle and takes a good swig.*)

Mollie. Och! ye greeny, an' when I want a stickin' plaster on my mouth I'll be after tellin' you. But I've somethin dridful to tell ye, Pat.

Pat. Be jabers, an' I guessed as much.

Mollie. Ye knows that Dr. Esty and Jack Sligh?

Pat. Yis.

Mollie. Well, they came here and ordered a drop, an' had another bad lookin' chap with them. Whin I wint out they tould me to close the dures.

Pat. An' ye did as they tould ye?

Mollie. Yis, They looked so quare like that I jist put me ear to that bit of a crack by the dure, an' heerd ivery blissid worried they said.

Pat. An' wot did they say?

Mollie. They were plottin' murther an' robbery an' traizon.

Pat. Begorrah, an' where is the traizon and murther to take place?

Mollie. At yer master's.

Pat. The devil you say. An' whin does the performance begin?

Mollie. This very night at midnight. The Docthor, good luck to him, said he'd take no part in such avil works.

Pat. Hoorah! Thin I'm good for the other two meself. I'll help meself to another drop to stiddy me narves. (*Takes a pull at the bottle.*) Mollie, I'm off, an' you'll plase excuse my abrupt haste. (*Going R.*)

Mollie. Don't get your head broken, Pat.

Pat. Niver a bit. (*Exit L.*)

Mollie. (*Taking tray with goblets, etc., R.*) He's a brave bye. I hope thim spalpeens wont get the better of him. (*Exit R.*)

CURTAIN.

ACT IV.

SCENE, same as in Acts II. and III. *Lights dim on stage. Enter PAT with fowling piece, followed by FRANK with a revolver.*

Pat. Faith an' its nearly midnight. The dirty blaggards may come ony minit. Begorrah, they'll not be expectin' to find us all ready for entertainin' company. It was a bit of a surprise party they were plannin', the rascals. Ha! ha! shure and it will be a complate surprise. (*Brand ishes his gun. Speaks to it*) Be jabbers, ye're a broth of a bye. Ye can rache farther than ony shillalah.

Frank Pat, keep still, or they'll hear us and escape.

Pat. Escape! I'd like to see them rogues run faster than buck shot. Ha! ha!

Frank. Pat, this is serious business. Don't laugh. I fear something terrible is going to happen.

Pat. An' that's just my own opinion. I'm no prophet or something will happen to one of them chaps that will be mighty serious like for him.

Frank. What would we done if Mollie hadn't overheard them?

Pat. Begorrah, they'd hilped themselves to the ould man's money mighty aisy.

Frank. It would nearly kill him to lose a largé sum of money. I believe he'd almost go mad.

Pat. Mad! Arrah, thin, an' ye're right. He'd be madder than a disappointed office seeker. His timper would kill him intirely. He'd be a ravin' corpse in tin minutes.

Frank. Hark! They are trying the hall window.

Pat. Git behind that chair, an' I'll shilter behind this table. We'll let them get well into the job first. (*FRANK gets behind arm chair L, PAT behind table L C. Noise of prying open shutters outside L.*) Aisy now, me bye.

Enter burglars SLIGH and LARK L.

Sligh. (*In a low tone.*) Good, so far. No trouble to get into this old shell

Lark. Where does he keep his money?

Sligh. In a bureau in the sitting room. He sleeps in the next room back of that. The door's open. Come on. Be cautious. (*Start toward R.*)

Pat. (*Rises.*) Be jabbers, I'll give ye a caution. *Levels the gun and fires. Gun snaps the cap but does not go off.**

SLIGH seizes the gun and they struggle, FRANK rises and levels his revolver at LARK. Fires and misses him. LARK draws and shoots FRANK, who falls toward C with a yell of pain. LARK tries to draw on PAT, but the rapid evolutions of the two make it impossible. LARK seizes the gun with his left hand, and together they wrench it

* In the burglary scene the action should be very rapid.

from PAT, who is hurled back against the wall R by SLIGH. *Enter ESTY L. He rushes to C.*

Sligh. (Speaks very rapidly R C in rear.) Lark, we're betrayed. They've raised the family. We can thank you for that, Esty. So you've found out who Old Greenback is at last? Damn it, I should think you would like to get back some of the money he stole from you. Curse the luck.

Lark. (Who is at R C in front, to ESTY.) I've a notion to shoot you. *(Levels his pistol. PAT snatches up the pistol dropped by FRANK and levels at LARK. SLIGH strikes down his arm with the fowling piece. Enter GREENBACK R crying, "Seize them." SLIGH dashes towards L crying to LARK "Escape for your life." LARK rushes to door L followed by SLIGH, firing at ESTY as he passes. PAT fires at them and breaks SLIGH'S leg.)*

Sligh. (Struggling to rise.) Help, Doctor, my leg's broken.

Esty. (Examining Frank's wound.) This poor boy needs help first.

G. (Excitedly.) What does this mean?

Pat. It manes that your robbed, but divil the thing did they get.

Esty. (Aside. Looking at G.) Good heavens! It is George. *(Picks up FRANK and places him in an arm chair C. Opens his clothes. Examines wound. Takes a small case of instruments from his pocket and lays them on the table. Probes the wound lightly. Shakes his head, "It's no use.")*

G. (Looks from one to another, bewildered.) Robbed, did you say? Oh, I'm ruined, ruined.

Esty. (Aside.) Ruined if he knew it.

Enter MRS. G. R.

Mrs. G. Oh, Frank is killed. *(Bends over him. Speaks in an undertone to him.)*

Pat. Howly saints, it is this poor bye that's ruined. *(Holding FRANK'S hand. All gather round FRANK.)* Do ye feel much pain? Are ye much hurt?

Frank. (In a weak voice.) Very badly, I'm afraid, Pat.

MILLIE rushes in R.

Millie. What's the matter? Somebody's hurt. *(Screams.)* Oh mercy, it's Frank. *(Kneels by his chair R. Grasps his hands.)* Are you hurt much, Frank? Oh, you're not. I know you are not.

Frank. Millie, I'm badly hurt,

Millie. Don't say that, Frank. You must get well. You will, won't you?

G. (Examines the wound.) Don't be alarmed, Millie. He'll be all right in a few days. The wound is not deep, I think. There is little blood. The bullet must have glanced from a rib. I'm glad they didn't get the money. We were lucky, I think.

Mrs. G. For shame, Seth. Don't mention money at such a time as this.

Pat. What's the use of money when this poor bye's at death's dure?

Esty. (Turns away. Aside.) How can I break the awful truth to them.

G. Esty, how did you happen to come here just in nick of time?

Esty. I heard of the villain's plan, and came with officers, who are now at the door. I came at once, and found Pat and Frank engaged in a death struggle.

Pat. Officers! Then may be they've caught that villain. If Mollie hadn't told me what she heard we wouldn't been here, an' Frank, poor bye, wouldn't bin mortally hurted.

G. Thank you, Mr. Esty, for your services, and you too, Pat and Frank.

Esty. You have nothing to thank us for.

Officer. (*Enters hurriedly L.*) We've got the villain. He's safe enough. (*Sees FRANK.*) What have we here? *

Esty. Murder!

Officer. Heavens what a night's work!

Mrs. G. Mercy on us, Mr. Esty, you are as pale as a sheet. What can we be thinking of that we haven't sent for a doctor? We're all out of our wits. Pat, go for him at once.

Esty. It is useless. He cannot live. I am a surgeon. His case is peculiar. I wish to give a few words of explanation to Mr. and Mrs. George Walford.

G. (*Starting.*) Walford! Lost! Who are you man?

Esty. Do not be surprised. You will learn all soon enough. (*To MILLIE, who is still kneeling by FRANK'S chair.*) Girl, arise. (*Lifts her. In great agitation.*) Others have closer claims on this poor sufferer. (*Smooths FRANK'S brow.*)

Mrs. G. Others have claims! What do you mean?

Esty. Seth, I am your brother Will.

G. (*Starting violently.*) What! Heavens! I thought you dead.

Mrs. G. This anxiety is terrible! What mystery is this? You know something of Frank's parentage. Can it be that he is our son? Speak and give relief to a mother's aching heart.

Esty. He is your long lost Willie.

Mrs. G. (*Kneels by FRANK R of chair, and kisses him again and again.*) Oh my poor boy, to find you dying is the last agony in a long life of anguish. And such a meeting after years of intercourse. (*Covers her face in her hands.*)

G. Wife, this man is an impostor. We have every reason to believe that our son died years ago. Sir, substantiate your story.

Esty. (*Passes to G., L C.*) George, I could easily satisfy you that I am your brother, did circumstances require proof. Willie was not drowned, as you supposed. In revenge of my wrongs I hired a villain to abduct him from his home. To elude justice we were obliged to abandon him to strangers. I have suffered more than death because of it. The man whom I made my servile tool, to-night tried to rob your house. He is here to bear witness.

Sligh. It is true every word of it.

Esty. Do you still doubt?

* Should it be inconvenient to introduce the officer, for want of actors, Pat may step to the door L, and return, reporting Lark's capture. He may also prevent Sligh's escape, making an appropriate remark.

G. No. It is too horrible to admit a doubt. What an awful judgment. To think of my treatment of my own poor boy. (*Takes FRANK'S hand, and falls on his knees at L of his chair. GREENBACK looks intently at FRANK.*) It can't be true. (*A pause.*) 'Tis a hideous dream. What evidence have you that this boy is the Willie you abandoned?

Esty. When we had him with us he fell one day and cut a gash back of his left ear. It healed and left a scar, sloping obliquely downward and backward.

Frank. Father, the scar is there. You will find it under my hair.

G. (*Finds scar.*) Doubt was anguish, but certainty is the torment of furies.

Mrs. G. Is there no ray of hope? All may yet be well.

Pat. Docthur, can't ye help the bye someway?

Esty. Frank, are you ready to go?

Frank. Yes. If I could but stay with father and mother a little longer I would be so happy.

G. Is there no hope?

Esty. None!

Sligh. (*Aside.*) Murder! and a rope for me. Oh for two sound legs! I'll try it. (*Tries to crawl out L.*)

Officer. (*Stopping SLIGH.*) Hold on, my boy. We need you.

G. And you, my brother, have done this. I thought myself a monster. What is the man who will steel an innocent babe? *Demon?*

Esty. Brother, dare I ask forgiveness of any but Him who forgives the vilest? Is there any reconciliation? (*Extends his hand. GREENBACK refuses it.*)

Mrs. G. Remember he had wrongs. Let the grave cover all thought of revenge.

Frank (*Speaking slowly and with effort.*) For my sake, father, forgive him. He meant me no harm. (*GREENBACK takes ESTY'S hand in silence.*)

Esty. He's going fast.

G. Willie darling, will you forgive me?

Frank. You were good to me, father, when nobody else was, and mother has been so kind. Kiss me, papa and mamma. (*They kiss him.*) Where's Millie?

Millie. Here I am, Frank. (*She kisses him.*)

G. The curse of Mammon is on us. Oh gold! when will thy power to blight and destroy be ended? My treasures are adders to sting me. My punishment is just. (*Bends over FRANK in silence. All silent for a few moments. Rises and looks in FRANK'S face.*) DEAD! (*MILLIE drops on her knees and leans her face on FRANK'S body.*)

Arrangement of characters : a semicircle around FRANK'S body.

MILLIE.

GREENBACK.

MRS. G.

ESTY.

PAT R.

L OFFICERS, (if present.)

SLOW CURTAIN.



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